

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-10 SS-15 INR-07 SP-02 L-03 /043 W
-----031359 241135Z /12

R 240815Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5950

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS KS US
SUBJ: LETTER FROM DEFENSE MINISTER SUH TO SECRETARY BROWN

1. DEFENSE MINISTER SUH HAS SENT LETTER (VIA ROK EMBASSY)
TO SECRETARY BROWN. LETTER, DATED AUGUST 20, ACKNOWLEDGES
LETTER OF THANKS SUH HAD RECEIVED FROM SECRETARY, AND
REVIEWS ROK POSITIONS ON VARIOUS ISSUES RELATED TO TROOP
WITHDRAWAL. EMBASSY HAS BEEN GIVEN COPY OF LETTER, WHICH
READS AS FOLLOWS:

2. DEAR SECRETARY BROWN:

PARAGRAPH 1: YOUR LETTER HAS BEEN RECEIVED WITH MUCH
GRATITUDE. KNOWING THE MANY AND VARIED DEMANDS THAT HAVE
OCCUPIED YOUR ATTENTION AND SCHEDULE OVER THE PAST MONTHS,
I CERTAINLY APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO VISIT
WITH US DURING THE RECENT 10TH SECURITY CONSULTATIVE MEET-
ING. I WISH TO THANK YOU FOR THE SUCCESS OF THAT MEETING
WITH YOU AND FOR THE CONTINUED SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE
TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA WHICH YLU SO ELOQUENTLY
EXPRESSED.

PARAGRAPH 2: AS DISCUSSED AT THE RECENT SCM, PERHAPS
THE GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR WAR IN THE FAR EAST MUST BE
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IN KOREA. AS NORTH KOREA HAS INCREASED ITS WAR CAPA-
BILITIES SIGNIFICANTLY AND PRESENTS A SERIOUS THREAT ON
THIS PENINSULA, THE FIRM RELATIONSHIP AND MUTUAL COOPERA-
TION BETWEEN THE ROK AND U.S. REMAINS A KEY FACTOR TO
THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE IN THIS AREA.

PARAGRAPH 3: THE PRESENCE OF U.S. GROUND FORCES IN

KOREA HAS CERTAINLY SERVED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE DETERRENCE OF RECKLESS AGGRESSION BY THE NORTH KOREANS. THIS FACT HAS EARNED THE WARMEST RESPECT OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE. BEING AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THERE ARE SOME UNAVOIDABLE REASONS FROM YOUR STANDPOINT, WE HAVE AGREED TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF THESE GROUND FORCES IN A SLOW, CAREFUL, METHODICAL MANNER. THE PREREQUISITE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS ACTION IS THAT COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES, INCLUDING U.S. AIR FORCE AUGMENTATION, SHOULD BE TAKEN IN ADVANCE OF OR IN PARALLEL WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE COMBAT GROUND FORCES. ALSO, THAT U.S. LOGISTIC, INTELLIGENCE, AND SIGNAL SUPPORT SHOULD REMAIN AVAILABLE TO THE ROK.

PARAGRAPH 4: WE HAVE AGREED THAT THE FIRST WITHDRAWAL INCREMENT WOULD CONSIST OF 6,000 SPACES, AND THAT THE MAINSTAY OF THE 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION, CONSISTING OF TWO BRIGADES AND THE DIVISION HEADQUARTERS, WOULD REMAIN IN KOREA UNTIL THE END OF THE WITHDRAWAL PLAN PERIOD. IN THE INTEREST OF MAINTAINING AN EFFECTIVE DETERRENT, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN PRIOR TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE LAST INCREMENT. IN THIS REGARD, YOUR EFFORTS IN COMMUNICATING THESE FACTS TO THE U.S. PEOPLE AND CONGRESS IN ORDER TO SOLICIT SUPPORT FOR APPROVAL OF THE COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES WILL BE APPRECIATED.

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PARAGRAPH 5: THE U.S. GROUND TROOP PRESENCE HASNBEEN BOTH THE SYMBOL AND THE REALITY OF AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO PEACE IN THE PACIFIC BASIN. THE FULL ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE U.S. 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION IS ONE WHICH CANNOT BE REPLACED BY THE SIMPLE TRANSFER OF WEAPONS FROM THE 2ND DIVISION. THEREFORE, THE TRANSFER OF EQUIPMENT OF THE WITHDRAWING FORCES, ADDITIONAL COMPENSATORY REQUIREMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED WITHDRAWAL, AND FIP SUPPORT BECOME NECESSARY TO RETAIN THE SAME MAGNITUDE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF DETERRENCE.

PARAGRAPH 6: THE ROK SIDE HAS WORKED OUT JOINTLY WITH GENERAL VESSEY A PRIORITIZED LIST OF OUR COMPLEMENTARY REQUIREMENTS WHICH I BELIEVE HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO YOU FOR CONSIDERATION. I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT HERE THAT THOSE PROJECTS WHICH ARE ASSIGNED LOWER PRIORITIES ARE BY NO MEANS DISPENSABLE. THEY ARE LIKE UNTO FINGERS AND LIMBS IN HUMAN BODY FUNCTIONING, THOUGH THEY MAY BE PRIORITIZED LOWER THAN THE HUMAN HEAD AND HEART, THEY ARE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THE FULLY CAPABLE HUMAN BEING.

PARAGRAPH 7: IT IS QUITE DIFFERENT FOR US TO PROJECT COSTS EVEN A FEW YEARS AHEAD BASED ON YOUR SYSTEM OF PRICING. OUR PRIME CONCERN IS WITH THE DETERMINATION OF QUANTITIES OF THE COMPLEMENTARY EQUIPMENT RATHER THAN DELINEATING OUR REQUIREMENTS IN TERMS OF DOLLAR FIGURES.

PARAGRAPH 8: THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA INTENDS ON NO ACCOUNT TO ESCALATE THE ARMS RACE ON THE PENINSULA. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT EVEN WITH THE FULL ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE AFOREMENTIONED COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES, WE WILL STILL FALL WELL SHORT OF THE NORTH'S CAPABILITIES IN VARIOUS FIELDS. WHAT WE INTEND AND WHAT WE NEED IS TO HAVE ADEQUATE CAPABILITY TO SUCCESSFULLY DEFEND OURSELVES FROM THE NORTH'S AGGRESSION. BY NARROWING DOWN THE EXISTING GAP
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WE WOULD MAKE THE NORTH THINK VERY CAREFULLY ABOUT THE COST OF SUCH AN ADVENTURE.

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PARAGRAPH 9: I BELIEVE THAT THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY TO MEET THE THREAT TO THE ROK SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE MUTUAL EFFORTS OF OUR TWO NATIONS. IN THIS REGARD, I THINK THAT ALL MAJOR COMBAT EQUIPMENT OF WITHDRAWING U.S. GROUND TROOPS SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED BY GRANT AID, AND THAT FMS CREDIT SHOULD BE UTILIZED TO MEET THE PRE-SENT FIP AND ADDITIONAL COMPLEMENTARY REQUIREMENTS.

PARAGRAPH 10: IT IS WORTHWHILE TO NOTE THE VALIANT EFFORTS OF MY COUNTRYMEN IN STRIVING TO PROVIDE FOR THE MILITARY STABILITY AND BALANCE OF THIS PENINSULA. AS YOU WELL KNOW, WE PRESENTLY HAVE 600,000 MEN UNDER ARMS AND THE PERCENTAGE OF DEFENSE EXPENDITURE PER GNP APPROXIMATES 8.8 PERCENT, INCLUDING FMS CREDIT WHICH WE MUST PLAN TO REIMBURSE. THIS REPRESENTS MANY MAN-DAYS AND DOLLARS, AND A CERTAIN, BUT WILLING SACRIFICE BY MY PEOPLE. THIS IS ALSO THE MAXIMUM LIMIT THE KOREAN ECONOMY CAN ENDURE.

PARAGRAPH 11: THUS, THE HEALTH OF THE KOREAN ECONOMY IS A MOST IMPORTANT BULWARK OF OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE. IN ORDER FOR OUR ECONOMIC PLANS TO MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE MILITARY POSTURE, THE PROVISION OF LONG TERM, LOW INTEREST CREDITS FROM THE U.S. WILL BE HELPFUL. IN THIS REGARD, YOUR ASSISTANCE WILL BE MOST APPRECIATED.

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PARAGRAPH 12: DURING THE SCM, MUCH WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN THE FORMULATION OF IMPORTANT AGREEMENTS CONCERNING THE AUGMENTATION OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE, WARTIME LOGISTICS SUPPORT, PREPOSITIONING OF WRM, FOSTERING DEFENSE INDUSTRIES, IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION OF ROK/US COMBINED EXERCISES, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMBINED COMMAND HEADQUARTERS TO BE ACTIVATED BY MID-YEAR 1978.

PARAGRAPH 13: OF COURSE, THE SPECIFIC DETAILS OF THESE VARIOUS PROGRAMS NEED TO BE DEVELOPED AND ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH OUR CONTINUED MUTUAL EFFORTS. AS A FOLLOW-UP, IT WOULD BE MOST DESIRABLE THAT NECESSARY STAFF FUNCTIONS CONTINUE TO PROCEED ON A NUMBER OF MATTERS WHICH WERE RAISED DURING THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE SCM THROUGH JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROK/US STEERING COMMITTEE. THESE MATTERS WERE NOT FULLY DISCUSSED NOR RESOLVED BECAUSE OF TIME RESTRAINTS, THUS MAKING CONTINUOUS COMBINED STAFF CONSULTATION NECESSARY.

PARAGRAPH 14: WE KOREAN PEOPLE ARE PROUD OF THE FACT THAT BY SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDING THIS PENINSULA, WE ARE SURELY CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMON INTERESTS OF THE U.S. AND ROK. AS PARTNERS IN THE PACIFIC BASIN, WE ARE HELPING TO ASSURE PEACE NOT ONLY IN THIS REGION BUT CAN SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE TO THE WORLD OF THE PROGRESS THAT CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH MUTUAL COOPERATION AND THRUST. WHAT WE INTEND IS NOT TO FIGHT TO WIN A WAR, BUT TO DETER ANY ATROCIOUS HOSTILITY BY MEANS OF THE ROK/US COMBINED DETERRENT. THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH OUR PROPER PRIOR PLANNING AND INVESTMENT.

PARAGRAPH 15: AGAIN I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR
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DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF KOREA, AND WARM-HEARTED COOPERATION
TOWARD THE SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, AND
WISH YOU CONTINUED SUCCESS IN YOUR OFFICE.

SINCERELY, SUH JYONG CHUL, MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE.
END TEXT.
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Message Attributes

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